

PEOPLE & THINGS

PROBABLY the world's foremost critic of public spectacles has written to me acidly of his visit to this year's Salzburg Festival.

"It is very different today," he laments, "from what it was before. In those days it was a sort of happy family gathering, but now it is a Mecca of the charabanc horde.

"Sitting in the row behind me, listening to Mozart's Serenade, a girl scratched busily away throughout the performance. Finally I heard the girl next to her ask 'What are you writing, Myrtle?' to which Myrtle answered 'I am writing my criticism of the score'."

Pains of Pleasure

THE weather in Salzburg is notorious in the summer and, as I recall it, also from before the war, the rain is pale brown in colour.

My eminent correspondent describes what he suffered at a performance of "The Magic Flute" in the Felsenreitschule, which is hacked out of the solid rock and is open to the sky.

"It was a cold and rainy night when I went there," he says, "and a huge canvas tarpaulin had been stretched across the auditorium, but on each side considerable space was left open for the rain and wind to enter. It was bitterly cold. Wise people has brought greatcoats and rugs but the grim place was crowded with shivering bodies.

"From the very beginning, couples unable to brave the elements any longer slunk out. I endured the misery for about half of the first act then followed their sensible example.

"My advice to anyone who proposes to witness future performances is to take with him a fur coat, a rug, the sort of cap Sherlock Holmes used to wear, woolen gloves and a hot-water bottle. But it would be wiser not to go at all.

"After all," he concludes, "one goes to Salzburg to hear Mozart. icy blasts blowing down one's neck paralyse the senses. I got off with a cold in the head but if I had stayed till the end I should now be in hospital with double pneumonia."

Mousers

MORE than once, when adrift in the sitting-room of a fastidious friend, I have noted the presence, midway between "Mind" and "La Parisienne" of the "Journal of the British Interplanetary Society."

I was rash enough to regard this as the caprice of an all-welcoming intelligence; but now the 2800 members of the society can pride themselves on having spotted a good thing when others had stuck at the local-railway stage. I learn from Mr. L. J. Carter, the society's secretary, that among the seven original members of more than twenty years ago were a builder, a chemist and a radio specialist; the founder himself, Mr. P. E. Cleator, was a Liverpool engineer.

A fine integrity has always been the mark of the society's publications; and although its sympathisers have until very recently been regarded as cranks of the first order, I now find in them no pardonable flush of triumph, no tendency to crow. Where others have passed in an hour from complete scepticism to talk of tickets to the moon, the society is proceeding in orderly fashion with a project for a "minimum orbital

By ATTICUS

unmanned satellite earth": "mouse" is its familiar name.

Holiday Task

TEENAGERS may care to try to name the authors of the following twelve books: "An American Tragedy," "Babbitt," "The Canterbury Tales," "Gulliver's Travels," "Leaves of Grass," "The Old Wives' Tale," "Utopia," "Vanity Fair," "The Origin of Species," "The Wealth of Nations," "The Rubaiyat," and "Tom Jones," and then compare their standard of education with that of the average American college graduate, aged twenty-one.

According to a recent Gallup Poll, 9 per cent. of graduates could not give the author of a single one, 39 per cent. could name more than three, and 52 per cent. could name only four.

Aristocracy's Arbitress



Miss Nancy Mitford

IN life, Miss Nancy Mitford is the most considerate of beings. I have, for example, known her to eat a large helping of stale fish, rather than embarrass an inexperienced host.

But in her books! There she is our greatest generator of unease, and rare is the reader whose vocabulary could never provoke her derision.

Senior students (those that is to say, who can negotiate the words "greatcoat" and "chimney breast" within hearing of Mr. Evelyn Waugh) will turn excitedly to Miss Mitford's essay on "The English Aristocracy" which forms part of the September issue of "Encounter."

Upper-class diction (or, as she here calls it, U-usage) is not her main subject, although she enjoins us to put on our "spectacles" before inditing a "telegram" ("glasses" and "wire" are non-U and so, I think, Miss Mitford, is your expression "amp;" means "I"). She introduces, instead, an even more terrifying concept: that of the wordless rejoinder. Silence is in her view "the only possible U-response" to such non-U gambits as the ejaculation "Cheers!" when raising a glass to the lips.

The English Milord

THOSE who despair of giving their silences any such lordly connotation should beware, none the less, of being ashamed of the fact—or, indeed, ashamed of anything else. "Shame," says Miss Mitford, "is a bourgeois notion."

Another thing to avoid is hasty action of any sort. "Any sign of undue haste," our tormentor tells us, "is apt to be non-U, and

I go so far as preferring, except for business letters not to use air-mail."

Other marks of the genuine U-man: he works hard, but not for money, has great possessions and takes them for granted, dislikes London but will not let his eighteenth-century properties there be pulled down, has a misplaced liking for herbaceous borders, tends to get rid of his wife (sharpeyed foreigners, Miss Mitford tells us, notice that there are many more duchesses than dukes in London society), and takes an un-Latin delight in showing his house to strangers for money. He likes to look poor, but not too poor.

In fact, she concludes, the English lord is a wily old bird who seldom overdoes anything. It is his enormous strength."

Nashua versus Swaps

THE great match race between the champion American three-year-olds Nashua and Swaps took place on Wednesday at Chicago's Washington Park, and Mr. William Woodward Jr.'s Nashua led from the start and won by five lengths.

This will have been one of the greatest upsets in American racing history. Swaps had beaten Nashua in the Kentucky Derby and two weeks ago won the American Derby.

The whole of the West Coast where Swaps comes from, were convinced that he was a second Man o' War, and the East, which is the home of Nashua, had to admit that Swaps had it on form.

It is estimated that 100 million dollars was bet on this race, mostly out of territorial pride, and the final odds were 10-3 on Swaps and 6-5 against Nashua.

All America has been waiting for this race for six weeks, the excitement being built up not only on account of its East/West rivalry but as a duel between the self-made owner-trainer combination (the millionaire Rex Ellsworth and his partner and trainer Tenney were once Mormon cowboys) and the wealthy Eastern sportsman who inherited the famous Belair Stud with which his father won many of the English Classics.

William Woodward's many English friends will have a chance of congratulating him when he comes over to Europe this week and visits the Doncaster sales.

Autumn of our Days

A PROPOS recent correspondence in THE SUNDAY TIMES, I have been reading a description of the sundial at the Huntly House Museum in Edinburgh which bears the inscription: "Tak tent o' time ere time be tint." The description is published in a modest but unique bi-monthly newsletter, itself named "The Sundial."

Some three years ago, Mr. J. R. Salter, then in charge of a Civil Service establishments office, was visited by a retired colleague who bewailed the isolation and monotony of his leisure. He thereupon decided to publish a newsletter with the aim of putting such people in touch with one another.

Now there are about 350 members, among whom retired bank managers, accountants and school-teachers predominate. "The Sundial" hopes in time to open a small country club for members and their guests.

Mr. Salter, who issues his newsletter from Red Lane, Claygate intends to publish many of the sundial mottoes which readers of THE SUNDAY TIMES sent in last month. He is surprised that no one adapted the title of this journal—"The sun day times."